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Letter dated 24 July 2006 from the representatives of Croatia and Serbia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to draw your attention to the joint statement of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Stjepan Mesić, and the President of the Republic of Serbia, Boris Tadić issued on 27 June 2006 on the occasion of the official visit of President Boris Tadić to Croatia.

We should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 80 of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Mirjana **Mladineo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Slavko **Kruljević**
Minister Plenipotentiary
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 24 July 2006 for the representatives of Croatia and Serbia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the President of Croatia and the President of Serbia

We, Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia, and Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, met on 27 June 2006 in Zagreb, and, after having exhaustively and openly, in a friendly atmosphere, examined the conditions and the prospects of our mutual relations, and the circumstances in the greater region,

aware of the special significance of the relations between the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Serbia for conditions in Southeast Europe,

determined to sustain the overall normalization of Croato-Serbian relations in the interest of the citizens of both countries, and in the interest of lasting stabilization of conditions in the region,

firmly committed to peace, stability and security as the only foundation for the building of the new architecture of relations in this part of Europe,

JOINTLY STATE:

1. For the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Serbia, and for Europe, the time of war is definitively over; the goals to which we will devote all our energy and on which we will focus all our activities are peace and progress.

2. We must courageously and unreservedly face the truth about everything that took place during the recent wars in the area of the former Yugoslavia so that we are never again exposed to such traumatic experiences. In this regard a particularly important role is played by full cooperation with the International Tribunal in The Hague focused on bringing to justice all persons indicted and relieving thereby whole nations of the liability of collective guilt.

3. There cannot and may not be any excuse for the perpetrators of war crimes, nor may they escape prosecution because of their past or present function, or of their ethnic background or of the ethnic background of their victims.

4. Greater effort is required in order to clarify the fate of all persons found to be missing after the recent wars, regardless of their ethnic background, regardless of their having been soldiers or civilians, and regardless of the location of their disappearance.

5. We will build the relations between the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Serbia on principles of full equality and mutual benefit, and in the light of the understanding that such relations are of particular significance for the general political climate in the region, and that they are the key to our focus on cooperation, democracy and the European model, because only they can open the door to the future.

6. We will develop our relations with all adjacent countries in a good neighbourly spirit and we will firmly oppose any attempt to resolve open issues in relations between states by encroaching upon territories of other states.

7. The consistent respect of human and minority rights is the only acceptable foundation for the continued building of democracy to which we are committed. In this regard, the legitimate concern for the members of ethnic minorities in the other country, for the Serbs in Croatia and the Croats in Serbia, must never become a pretext for turning them into a tool serving the achievement of particular goals of the state of their mother nation.

8. Bilateral cooperation between our two states shall serve exclusively the satisfaction and promotion of the interests and requirements of all our citizens, and it is not and may not be levelled at any third state or groups of states. This also refers to the joint appearances of the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Serbia in international organizations and third markets.

9. Within the scope of promotion and comprehensive development of our mutual relations we will devote particular attention to the return of all refugees, regardless of their ethnic background, wishing to return to their earlier place of residence and live there in peace and security.

10. Both the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Serbia see their future in united Europe. The two countries will assist and support each other on the road to achieving their European and Euroatlantic ambitions and aspirations.

This statement has been drawn up in two copies, one in Croatian and one in Serbian, both having the force of the original.

Zagreb, 27 June 2006